Alberta

Campus Alberta Quality Council

2014-2017 Action Plan

Alberta Innovation and Advanced Education

Campus Alberta Quality Council

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Message from the Interim Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC), we are pleased to provide you with our 2014-17 Action Plan. This Action Plan, Council's third, has been developed in accordance with best-practices guidelines identified by the *Public Agencies Governance Framework.* It also attempts to align Council's strategic planning activities with Innovation and Advanced Education's *Business Plan 2014-17.*

The 2014-17 Action Plan identifies three goals based on the two core businesses of CAQC (providing advice and recommendations to the Minister with respect to new degree program proposals and monitoring approved degree programs after their implementation). The three goals for this Action Plan are: 1) CAQC will carry out quality reviews that are well-developed, efficient, and evidence-based; 2) Council will ensure that degree programs approved on recommendation of CAQC continue to meet Council's quality standards and conditions , and 3) Council will effectively communicate and collaborate with institutions, government and other stakeholders to maintain quality delivery of degree programs to serve the best interests of learners and contribute to the development of innovation.

The priority initiatives identified within each of the goals draw heavily on Council's operating principles such as the recognition that the primary responsibility for academic and institutional quality assurance rests with post-secondary institutions themselves. Recognizing the importance of institutional self-governance, CAQC is committed to working closely with each institution offering degree programs in Alberta in a collaborative relationship that encourages continuous improvement in institutional quality assurance policy and processes. In all situations, the best interests of learners are at the core of Council's activities as it assesses and monitors the quality of degree programs.

Council will continue to support collaboration within Campus Alberta by ensuring that new collaborative delivery of degree arrangements, developed on the basis of the programs approved on Council's recommendation, meet CAQC's quality standards and conditions. Council will also continue to work closely with institutions to refine and clarify Council's expectations with respect to the role of faculty scholarship, research and teaching excellence in contributing to high quality degree programs. In order to insure that Alberta standards are recognized nationally and internationally and to explore opportunities for sharing effective practices among quality assurance agencies, Council will engage in discussion with other Canadian and international agencies with similar mandates.

We look forward to working with the Ministry to meet the best interests of learners and ensure high quality degree programs will continue to be available to learners. Council also looks forward to providing you with an update on our 2014-17 Action Plan in our 2014-15 Annual Report.

Peter Mahaffy
Interim Co-Chair

Art Quinney
Interim Co-Chair

Mandate

Established under section 108 of the *Post-secondary Learning Act (Act)*, the Campus Alberta Quality Council is an arms-length quality assurance agency that has been established to advance the quality of the post-secondary system in Alberta and is accountable to the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education (Minister). The Council is an advisory body whose primary responsibility is to provide advice and recommendations to the Minister on applications from post-secondary institutions seeking to offer new degree programs in Alberta under the terms of the *Act* and the Programs of Study Regulation (91/2009). The Council also has a responsibility to review and monitor degree programs to ensure that they meet its expectations of quality.

Operating Principles

Principle 1 – The Council standards are appropriate to the program level/scope and are comparable to national and international standards. Within this context, Council is open to flexibility and innovation in degree programming.

Principle 2 – The best interests of learners are at the core of Council's activities as it assesses and monitors the quality of degree programs.

Principle 3 – The Council respects the foundational role of academic freedom in the provision of high quality post-secondary programs.

Principle 4 – Peer evaluation is an essential component of the Council's evaluation of post-secondary degree programs.

Principle 5 – Stakeholder participation is an integral part of the degree appraisal process.

Principle 6 – The Council acts to develop and retain autonomy from influences that may undermine or otherwise affect trust in its functions and decisions.

Principle 7 – The Council exhibits equity in all aspects of its operation.

Principle 8 – The Council exhibits and promotes openness and transparency in all its practices and policies.

Principle 9 – Processes established by the Council may be iterative in nature when, in Council's opinion, a proposed degree program has the potential for development and improvement.

Principle 10 – Within the context of its iterative processes, the Council acts expeditiously and in keeping with principles of natural justice.

Principle 11 – The Council is committed to the quality assurance review of its own activities and to the interprovincial sharing of best practices in post-secondary degree program quality assessment.

Principle 12 – The Council exhibits and promotes appreciation of institutional diversity and respect for institutional autonomy and integrity among the institutions proposing degree programs.

Principle 13 – The Council ensures that approved degree programs and Council decisions with respect to them are monitored and the extent of monitoring is appropriate to the experience of the institution.

Principle 14 – Members and peer reviewers shall act in accordance with ethical standards and abide by Council's code of conduct which includes provisions on conflict of interest.

Principle 15 – The Council recognizes that the primary responsibility for academic and institutional quality assurance rests with post-secondary institutions themselves.

Goals and Priority Initiatives

Respecting its mandate, the Campus Alberta Quality Council has two core businesses:

Core Business 1	Provide advice and recommendations to the Minister with respect to new degree program proposals.
Core Business 2	Monitor approved degree programs after their implementation.

As an advisory agency reporting to the Minister, Council attempts to align its planned activities with the strategic priorities of Innovation and Advanced Education (IAE). Council's current three-year plan relates CAQC's future work to the following goal and priority initiatives in IAE's 2014-17 Business Plan, which are most closely related to Council's work:

IAE Goal One:	Optimize our human potential.
Priority Initiative 1.1	Strengthen alignment within the Campus Alberta system and between Campus Alberta and the K-12 education system to better achieve common outcomes that benefit Albertans.
Priority Initiative 1.3	Enhance learner pathways into and through community learning, post-secondary programs including apprenticeship, and workplaces so that Albertans can better achieve their learning goals.
Priority Initiative 1.9	Improve alignment of advanced learning programs with Alberta's economic and labour needs so that, as much as possible, study leads to fulfilling and relevant employment.

Council has outlined three goals, along with priority initiatives and strategies for achieving these goals.

Goal 1 CAQC will carry out quality reviews that are well-developed, efficient, and evidence-based.

Priority Initiatives:

1.1 Support collaboration within Campus Alberta by ensuring that new collaborative delivery of degree arrangements, developed on the basis of the programs approved on Council's recommendation, meet Council's quality standards and conditions.

1.2 Conduct a systematic review of Council's quality assessment processes and guidelines and experience with respect to program proposals from non-resident institutions.

1.3 Explore additional ways to emphasize quality assurance of teaching and learning.

1.4 Examine the use of learning outcomes analysis as a possible future element of assessment processes.

1.5 Work with Ministry officials to implement appropriate responses to the Minister's review of CAQC.

Goal 2 Council will ensure that degree programs approved on recommendation of CAQC continue to meet Council's quality standards and conditions.

Priority Initiatives:

2.1 **Consider the two-year Quality Assurance Audit Pilot Project report with its possible implications for the monitoring of degree granting institutions.**

2.2 **Continue to work with institutions to further refine expectations for level of scholarly activity using, as appropriate, adaptations of frameworks such as Boyer's models of scholarship.**

2.3 **Assist in the development of quality assurance processes within Campus Alberta, in particular through collaborative interactions with institutions, including co-organizing a provincial workshop to share effective practices in quality assurance.**

Goal 3 Council will effectively communicate and collaborate with institutions, government and other stakeholders to maintain quality delivery of degree programs to serve the best interests of learners and contribute to the development of innovation.

Priority Initiatives:

3.1 **Increase Council's proactive interaction and dialogue with stakeholders regarding Council's role and processes.**

3.2 **Facilitate collaborative interactions with ACAT around common areas of interest.**

3.3 **Upon appointment of a new CAQC Chair, review and renew the Mandate and Roles document.**

3.4 **Through Council's Chair, enhance regular communication with the Minister and senior Ministry officials.**

3.5 **Explore ways to provide advice with respect to Ministry initiatives and policies that are relevant to Council's mandate.**

3.6 **Through Council's Chair and Secretariat, enhance consultation and share effective practices with post-secondary quality assurance agencies in Canada.**